1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

587 It may be noted that this custom may conflict with the other custom, previously mentioned, that a woman objects to marrying a man younger than herself. In the case mentioned by Mr Man a young man was compelled to marry a woman who was considerably his senior[1].

I believe that, in connection with, or underlying this custom there was an objection against a widow marrying a man who was older than her former husband (and who would therefore be his *ot-ötoatue*). I regret that I cannot speak with certainty on these matters.

854 We may turn now to the duties to one another of parents and children. During their infancy the children are in the care of the mother. Children are, however, such favourites with the Andamanese that a child is played with and petted and nursed not only by his own father and mother but by everyone in the village. A woman with an unweaned child will often give suck [853] to the children of other women. Babies are not weaned till they are three or four years old.

• [482] Before the children can walk, they are carried about by the mother, and sometimes by the father or other persons, in a bark sling (called *čiba* in *Aka-Jeru*), which is shown in Plate XIV.

857 After they can walk the children generally accompany their mothers in their expeditions near the camp for firewood or vegetables. When they are not with their mothers they amuse themselves with games in the village or on the beach. All the children of the coast villages learn to swim when they are very young, in fact almost as soon as they learn to walk, and many of their games are conducted in the water.

868 When a boy reaches the age of five or six his father makes him a toy bow and arrows, and sometimes a toy canoe. From this time the boy begins to learn the occupations of men and begins to pick up knowledge about the animals and trees and fishes of his country. The girl, accompanying her mother on her expeditions to gather roots and seeds, or to catch fish or pick up molluscs on the reefs, learns what it is necessary for women to know.

855 Until the age of about eight to ten a child lives with his

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 139.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

PLATE XIV

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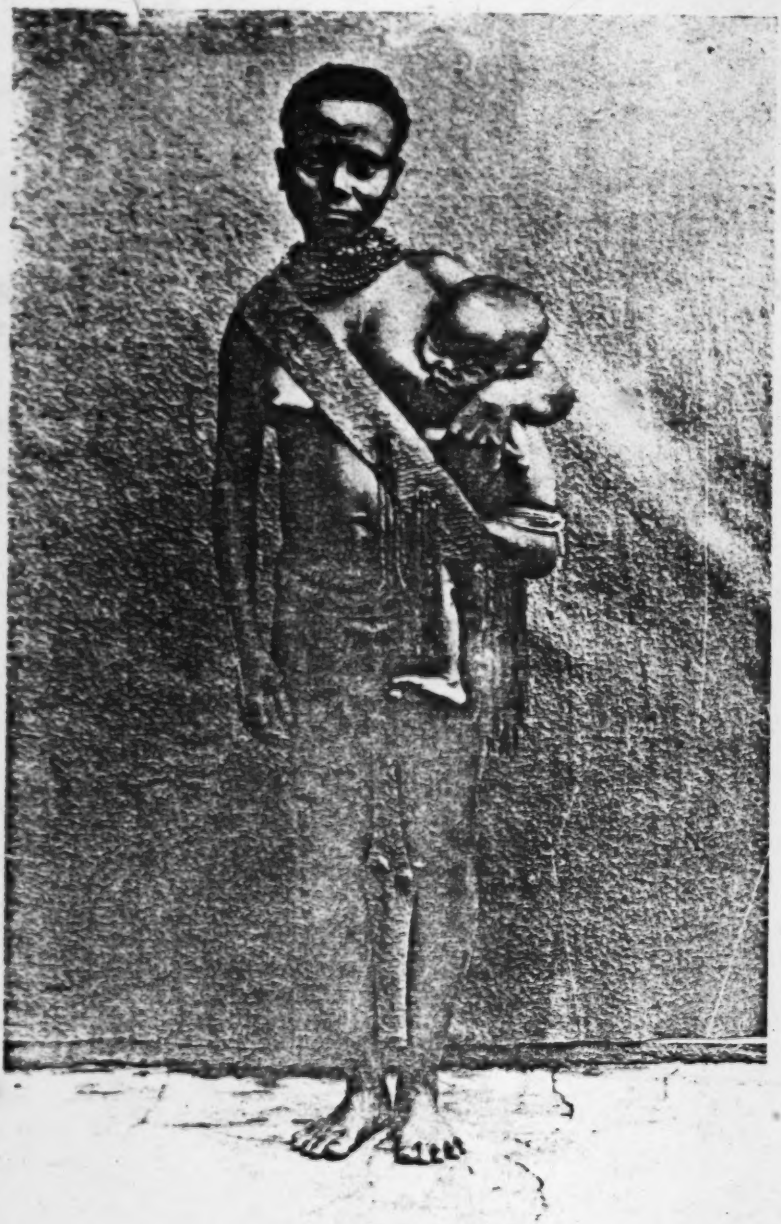

A woman with her child

[p. 126A]

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

as human bones, and ornaments made of them are commonly worn.

There are a number of other ornaments that are commonly worn, not only on ceremonial occasions, which, unlike the strings of human bones, do not obviously have a magical purpose. Such are necklaces made of various kinds of shells, and of mangrove seeds. At the present time the natives obtain beads from Port Blair and make ornaments of these.

The ordinary costume of the women is different from that of the men. Every woman and girl wears at least one belt of *Pandanus* leaf. There is one kind of belt that is always worn by married women and which may not be worn by unmarried girls. There is another kind of belt that may only be worn by unmarried girls. The women of the Southern tribes wear a bundle of leaves of the *Mimusops littoralis* laid one over another suspended from the front of the belt so as to cover the pudenda. In the Northern tribes it was formerly the custom for the women to wear a similar apron of the leaves of a plant called *čainyo*, and over this they also wore a tassel of shredded palm-leaf stem (*koro*). Within recent years the Northern tribes have given up their own custom in this matter and have adopted the custom of the Southern tribes.

Women often wear round the neck a piece of string similar to that worn by the men, but as they do not carry knives it does not serve the same purpose. It is more usual for a woman to wear a necklace of some sort. Nowadays they are rather fond of necklaces of beads which they obtain from the Settlement at Port Blair. In former times different kinds of shells were used, such as the *Dentalium octogonum*.

With the exception that men wear the belt of rope, and women wear the belt of *Pandanus* leaf and the apron of leaves, there is no difference between the ornaments worn by men and by women. On the occasion of a dance or other ceremony a woman may wear any of the objects described as being worn by men on such occasions. They also wear in the same way strings of human or animal bones.

One object which would seem to have a purely utilitarian purpose is the sling used for carrying children (called in *Aka-*

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

301 *Ĵeru čiba*). This object, however, seems to have its ceremonial
• 482 uses also. In one of the initiation ceremonies that I saw, the man who was officiating wore such a sling round his shoulders during the ceremony.

535 In the earlier parts of this chapter reference has been made several times to the dance of the Andaman Islanders. For the natives the dance is both a means of enjoyment and also a ceremony. The period of mourning for the dead is brought to a close by a dance, in which all the mourners join. As will be shown later, a dance was generally held before a fight, in former times when fights occurred. The ceremony by which two hostile local groups made peace with one another was a dance.

In the initiation ceremonies there are special dances, which have already been described, in connection with the pig-eating and turtle-eating ceremonies. With the exception of these special dances, and the peace-making dance to be described later, there is only one kind of dance in any given tribe. Thus the dance at the end of mourning, or before setting out on an attack on enemies, is in all essentials exactly the same as the dance in which the natives indulge when the day's hunting has been successful and the evening is fine.

The time for dancing, except in connection with certain ceremonies, is at night, after the evening meal. The dance takes place on the open ground in the centre of the village. This is swept clean by the women and the younger men. One or two fires are lighted, and little heaps of resin are placed in convenient situations to provide lights. These have to be replenished from time to time as the dance proceeds. Near one end of the
[534] dancing ground is placed a sounding-board, upon which it is the duty of one man to beat time with his foot. A sounding-board is a piece of wood somewhat of the shape of a large shield, cut from the hard *Pterocarpus* tree. One is shown in Plate VI. Behind the sounding-board, or a little to one side of it, the women, who form the chorus, sit in a row, with their legs stretched out in front of them, facing the dancing-ground. The men who intend to dance sit or stand round the edge of the space reserved for the dance.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

481 toes of each foot; if a tree is branched they will scramble up it almost as quickly as if scaling a ladder, and though when "swarming" a mast or cocoa-nut tree they clasp the trunk in the usual manner with the arms and legs, their movements are more rapid, and they are less easily fatigued, than are the generality of natives of India; in descending also they display the same activity.

516 3. I have observed a peculiar trick among young men and women, after a lengthened rest or after engaging in some sedentary occupation, of twisting their bodies from side to side in order to stretch the muscles of the back. In doing this they produce a succession of sounds like that caused by cracking the joints of one's fingers.

4. Their favourite position in taking temporary rest after any violent or prolonged exertion is the ordinary Oriental posture between sitting and standing, *i.e.*, squatting on their heels; if very much exhausted they either sit or lie down.

513 5. The usual attitude in sleep (*vide* Plate III, fig. 2) is to lie on one side, preferably the right, with the knees bent so as to allow of the hand of the upper arm being placed between the thighs and the other hand under the head, which is raised on some impromptu pillow, such as a bundle or a roll of sleeping mat.

142 6. Many are able to shut one eye without closing the other, but they do not appear to possess the power of moving the ears or scalp. They can extend one finger without opening the hand. No tricks of sleight of hand are known to or attempted by them.

7. Much use is made of the feet in holding and picking up light objects, and the great toe is in a considerable degree [483] opposable. When a heavy load has to be moved they prefer pushing to dragging it.[1]

●482 **Physical Powers and Senses.**—1. Though for a short distance heavier loads are often borne, the maximum of a man's burden is about 40 lbs.; this he will on occasion carry for as much as 15 miles through the jungles between sunrise and sunset, a distance rarely exceeded in one day under any circumstances, or for more than two or three days in succession. This has been particularly remarked when they have been in pursuit of runaway convicts, for, if they fail in coming up with them within the third day, they are wont to take a long rest, unless strong inducements are offered by way of inciting them to further efforts.

[1] They do not understand, or, at least, do not carry into practice, the principle of pushing or dragging a weight *simultaneously*, whether in silence or to the sound of the voice.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

2. Unlike the natives of India, the men allow scarce any weight to rest on the head; the entire strain is thrown on the shoulders and back by passing the cord to which the load is attached across the chest. As this mode would with women be attended with inconvenience on account of the *chīp-*,[1] besides causing injury to the breasts, the cord is in their case brought over the head,[2] and the back is bent in order to reduce the pressure. 482

3. In his account of a visit to the Nágá Hills, about ten years ago,[3] Mr. S. E. Peal makes allusion to the "peculiar noise, like a whistle or note on a flute, clear and plain, and seeming to come from the chest, made by Nágánis when carrying loads and distressed." The same peculiarity is noticeable under similar circumstances among the Andamanese of *both* sexes. [142]

4. Running is seldom practised by them except for a short distance, when hunting, &c., and four or five hundred yards appears to be the greatest extent of ground they can cover without halting or slackening speed. Though in running or walking on a good road they are generally passed without difficulty by natives of India, their superiority in the jungles is at once manifest when the beaten track is left; and in the ease and rapidity with which they are able to bound over rocks, fallen trees, mangrove roots, and other obstacles, few, if any, would care, or be able, to compete with them. 481

5. Both coastmen and "junglees" are, as a rule, gifted with extremely keen sight. It was, however, found impossible to gauge their powers by the test papers[4] in consequence of their inability to count; but many satisfactory proofs of their acuteness of vision have been afforded, as, for instance, by the manner in which, while coasting along the shore or when threading their way through the jungle, they detect birds or other objects, so hidden by the dense foliage of their forests as to be hardly distinguishable, even when pointed out, to more than ordinarily sharp-eyed Europeans and others. 151

6. The inland tribes have especially keen scent, and are able from an almost incredible distance to specify, and direct their steps towards, any particular tree that may happen to be in blossom; their sense of taste is also strongly developed, enabling them to discriminate between the various flowers from which the bees have produced their honey.

7. On the other hand, while the coastmen are not deficient in

[1] *Vide* Appendix B, No. 24.

[2] A peculiarity in the conformation of the female skull due to this practice will be hereafter noted, under the heading of "Deformations," paragraph 3.

[3] *Vide* "Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal," vol. xli, part 1, 1872.

[4] Viz., those used in the Army for recruiting purposes.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

PLATE VI.

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●482
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GREAT ANDAMAN TYPES AT PORT BLAIR HOME.

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CHANG-TONGA (SECOND-CLASS LEAN-TO) IN SOUTH ANDAMAN: FRIENDS WEEPING TOGETHER AFTER LONG SEPARATION; ATTITUDE IN SLEEP, ETC.

[facing p. 78]

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

PLATE VIII.

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ANDAMANESE EQUIPPED FOR JOURNEY.

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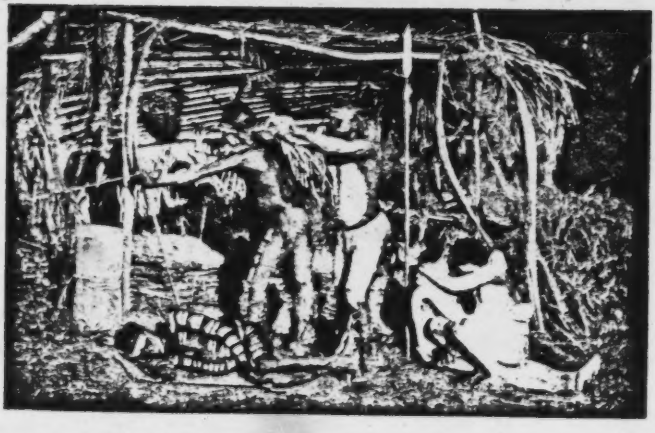

ANDAMANESE SHOOTING, DANCING, SLEEPING, AND GREETING.

[facing p. 110]

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

be supposed, is soon obliterated, and requires therefore to be constantly renewed.

2. Only in very exceptional cases, when the services of a woman are not obtainable, will men consent to operate upon one another, for among these savages shaving is regarded as essentially a feminine occupation:[1] the instrument used for this purpose is effective, if rude, and consists merely of a flake of quartz, or now more generally of glass; the manner in which these primitive razors are made is described under "Stone Implements."[2]

3. Previous to shaving an *infant*, the mother usually moistens the head with milk which she presses from her breast, but when operating upon bigger children and adults, water only is used.

Deformations.—1. Unless tattooing can be so regarded, these savages do not intentionally produce any deformities, or practice artificial deformations in any way.[3] No attempt is made to alter the shape of the nose by flattening or pinching it, nor is the cartilaginous septum ever perforated for the purpose of inserting ornamental bars or rings.

2. In this, as in many other respects, the Andamanese differ greatly from their neighbours, the Nicobarese, who not only flatten the occiputs of their children in infancy, but, from the period of puberty, blacken their teeth,[4] and perforate the lobes of their ears to such an extent as to enable them, by the time they are full grown, to insert a wooden cylindrical instrument three-quarters of an inch thick.

3. There is, however, a deformity of the skull observable in most Andamanese women, but it is caused unintentionally, and arises from the practice, to which allusion has already been made,[5] of placing the cane or cord by which a load is borne across the anterior portion of the cranium: this habit, especially when commenced at an early age, cannot fail to produce a more or less deep indentation.[6]

[1] *Vide ante* "Social Relations," paragraph 3.

[2] *Vide post* "Stone Implements," paragraph 4.

[3] Mutilation, such as the amputation of a part, or whole, of the fingers, which is practised among certain African tribes, is quite unknown to this race, as are also the customs of circumcision and castration.

[4] "Men and women use so large a quantity of betel-nut lime and betel-leaves that their teeth are as black as ink, and the space between them being filled with that matter they appear as a solid piece, much like the horn inserted in the jaws of the tortoise" (*vide* "Notice of the Nicobar Islands," by the Rev. P. Barbe).

[5] *Vide ante* "Physical Powers and Senses," paragraph 2.

[6] So strongly marked is the deformation in most cases, that the late Dr. J. Barnard Davis, being unaware of its true cause, in a letter to me on the subject, wrote as follows:—"The skull shows unmistakably that she has been subjected to the same barbarous treatment which the women among Australians have to submit to: every Australian woman's skull that I have

145 582 to about 60 to 65, if he reaches "old age." Except as to marriage at an earlier age, about 18, these figures apply fairly to the women also, who, however, live somewhat longer than the men, retaining in old age both health and mental faculties.

163 [803] **Reproduction.**—The marriages are infructuous, though barrenness is uncommon, a couple rarely producing families of even moderate size and many none at all. The child-bearing age is from 16 to 35; weaning is much delayed.

291 147 **Endurance.**—Left to themselves the Andamanese go stark naked and with head uncovered, except that the women wear, as clothing and not ornament, one or more leaves in front and a bunch of leaves tied round the waist behind, or a tassel of leaves all round. Jarawas, however, of both sexes have been seen entirely naked. They dislike and fear cold, but not heat, though they avoid exposure to the sun; and being accustomed to gratify every sensation as it arises, they endure thirst, hunger, want of sleep, fatigue and bodily discomfort badly. Want of sleep, such as occurs at their dances for occasionally as much as four days and nights, exhausts them greatly. A man's load is 40 lbs. and his distance 15 miles for a day or two only. After that he will rest, whatever the urgency. [482]

252 262 **Food.**—The food consists of fish, pork, turtle, iguana, "wild cat" (*paradoxurus sp.*), shell-fish, turtle eggs, certain larvæ, and a great variety of fruit, seeds, roots, and honey, and is plentiful both by sea and land. They never starve, though they are habitually heavy eaters. The food is always cooked and commonly eaten very hot. As much as possible of an animal is eaten and the Andamanese, like most hunters, have found out the dietary value of tripe. The Andamanese are expert cooks and adept at preparing delicacies from parts of animals and fish.

142 **Skin.**—The skin, which is smooth, greasy and satiny, varies in colour from an intense sheeny black to a reddish brown on the unexposed parts and also on the collar bones, cheeks and other prominences of the body. Its general appearance has been likened to a "black-leaded stove." The scalp, the lips and nostrils are black, and there are black patches on the palate. The soles of the feet are brownish yellow. The Bojigngiji Group (South Andaman) are the darkest, and among the Onges parts of the face are a light reddish-brown. The Jarawas are distinctly fairer than the rest, the general colour being a deep reddish brown. Leucoderma occurs on the fingers and lips.

Hair.—The hair varies from a sooty black to dark and light brown, yellowish brown and red. The general appearance of it is sooty black or yellowish brown. Except on the head the hair is scanty, but not absent: on the head it grows in small rings, which give it the appearance of growing in tufts, though it is really closely and evenly distributed over the whole scalp. Limited baldness is unknown, but temporary general baldness after disease occurs with a weak growth of the hair afterwards. The hair is not shaved, except on the head and eyebrows, and each tribe has, with many fantastic individual variants, its own method of wearing it. It turns grey at about 40, but white hair is not common. [302] [145]

Shaving is "woman's work" and was performed by small flakes of quartz, but nowadays flakes from the kicks of glass bottles are substituted. It is effective and close, but a painful operation on an European's face, as I proved by personal experience many years ago.

Bodily Parts.—The mouth is large, the palate hard and highly arched, the lips well formed. The hands and feet are small and well made. The ears are small and well shaped, the eyes are generally dark to a very dark brown, bright, liquid and clear, but prominent with slightly elevated outer angles and become dulled with age. The teeth, in the young, except amongst the Onges, are white, good and on the whole free from disease. Those of the Onges are irregular and discoloured. As age advances the teeth generally lose their whiteness and become worn, but without much caries. The teeth are roughly used without any care whatever. Dentition is early.

164 **Diseases.**—The muscular strength of the Andamanese is great, but their vitality is nevertheless low, and the apparently robust quickly die after sickening

K 361 [162] A 114 there were no Andamanese there, but 400 people consisting of 133 males and 130 females who migrated from Bassein in 1924. They were Karen Christians who had settled there. After returning to Long Island on the 12th, Mr Sarkar and party left in the motor boat "Return" for a short cruise along the Jarawa country. Besides Mr Joseph, there were Mr Pooviah and a few of his Burman Bush Police armed with rifles and guns. The party passed through the Homfray's Strait and anchored at the north eastern corner of the Spike Island. Loka and his party of three Andamanese accompanied them in their two canoes. They came to the shore in one of the Andamanese canoes and after entering the forest they found A [501] bundles of bamboos piled up at one corner. This was identified as a Jarawa raft. There were also three paddles made out of a palm tree. These specimens were procured for the Department. After proceeding some distance in the jungle, 19 small fire places were counted in scattered manner. A A [342] porary hut was also noticed at a short distance. A number of objects usually [383] used by the Andamanese tribes for household purposes was found including [411] a sling for carrying babies. A beautiful specimen of a Jarawa Bow painted [531] in red in geometrical designs was also found. Photographs were taken of the settlements of the Jarawa camp and objects collected for the Museum. In another place at *Yeratiajig* remnants of a Jarawa camp including pottery and bones of animals, etc., were found. The party returned to Long Island on 14-3-48 and examined 8 of the remaining members of Loka's party. It left the same day for Port Blair where it arrived at 10 P.M. On the 25th Mr Sarkar and his party with the Deputy Chief Commissioner Mr Gupta, left for Kar Nicobar where it arrived on the following day. It returned to Port Blair after staying for a few days. During this time in Kar Nicobar, besides studying the Nicobarese of the Island Mr Sarkar met two Jarawa children who were captured and brought over there and placed in a local Mission School for education.

In the following year in January 1949, another small party was sent under Dr A. K. Mitra with Messrs H. K. Bose and A. Bhattacharyya, to continue A the survey of the Little Andaman further along the eastern coast. They [361] visited *Hut Bay* on the 28th and went to the Onge settlement there. A large [349] circular hut similar to that seen by us at Tambobui was observed. It contained [350] nine cots with a fire place in the centre. There were also two outrigger canoes, [364] one in front of the hut and another on the beach. Altogether 11 Onges were [162] found consisting of 2 adult males, 6 females and 3 young children between [125] the ages of 6 to 15. The 8 adults and the adolescent boys were carefully measured and observations noted about their special somatic characters. After leaving Hut Bay they went as far as the South Point which is the southernmost point on the eastern coast of the Little Andaman, but did not see any other Onge settlement. They had to return on the 31st as the launch could not be spared any further.

A [142] The Onges were found to be strong and healthy and free from venereal [164] disease, a scourge, which along with tuberculosis were chiefly responsible A for the rapid depopulation of the Andamanese tribes. Our observations agree [142] with the accounts of the Negritos of the Andaman Islands published before

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

291 754 *naquinēghē* exposes the former owner to harm. Ill-disposed persons could use it for black magic practices. I collected specimens of this garment, all of them, however, brand-new – for the above-mentioned reason. To avoid trouble to the owner, nobody is allowed to touch the *naquinēghē*, which is worn in front of the vulva. To touch it is a deadly offence. Aside from the *naquinēghē*, Andaman 842 263 colonists attribute the natives' sterility to their abhorrence of salt. Another opinion would have it that the lack of salt transforms human saliva into poison: the Jarawas, by spitting on their arrows render them poisonous. The absurdity of this belief is so evident that it requires no confutation. The Onge refuse to eat salt because they consider it unhealthy, or, to say the least, disgusting.

III. Illnesses and Onge Curative Methods

164 Few illnesses affect the Onge, but they succumb to those few with surprising speed. Often they become seriously ill for mysterious reasons and in spite of their robust appearance. Smallpox, tuberculosis and poliomyelitis are unknown in Little Andaman, although they sometimes strike in the nearby Nicobars. Measles broke out on the island on more than one occasion, killing off all the inhabitants of several communal huts, which I later found deserted and in ruins. With regard to syphilis, the Indian Census of 1931 quotes an old remark of PORTMAN's concerning a few individuals considered by him as infected. This was later denied.

Onge women are more resistant to illness than men. Wounds heal promptly [752] in both sexes, without the aid of remedies. A few of the older men, however, [123] had suppurating sores on their legs, slow to disappear even when disinfected and treated by me with European medicines. No similar sores were found on women. On the other hand, women suffer more than men from ringworm, mainly in the umbilical region. Nothing is done to rid them of it because the discomfort is slight. I suggested an Indian cure made with the leaves of the neem tree, or Melia azedarach, very common in Southern Asia where it is considered sacred. I imported the plant to Little Andaman, but [123] the Onge displayed no interest in it. I found a single instance of leucoderma, in a woman with whitish spots on her hands and lips. I could get no reliable information about the incidence of cancer, but it appears to be rare on the island. No baldness is to be seen in Little Andaman, and I found few traces of [142] greying hair, as the Onge die young. A transversal bregmatic furrow is noticeable [482] in all individuals, male and female, as a consequence of carrying loads hung from their heads by a strip of bark. The Onge start doing this in childhood. An artificial, unintentional deformation of the skull is the result of that uncomfortable habit.

751 302 [386] For hygienic reasons the Little Andaman aborigines paint their bodies with refined clay and ochre of various shades, mainly reddish. This gives the women occasion to embellish the bodies of their husbands with an endless variety of geometrical designs. Every year I found changes in their patterns, and I

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

and the 'peppercorn' hair (disposed in tufts with bare areas) do indeed recall the Bushmen, but superficial resemblances are not enough to classify the two peoples as at all closely related. There is an important difference between the two in the structure and cross-section of the hair. Hairs from the Onges which were examined in Calcutta were remarkably uniform, indicating the racial purity of the people, unlike those of the Arioto, which showed considerable variation in cross-section, from the almost circular straight hair of the Mongoloid type, to the flattened, almost remiform hair of the original Negritos.

Different, too, is the shape of the head; I have never seen in the Negritos the typical Bushmen head, with the prominent occiput, and I saw no Andamanese with the pseudo-mongoloid appearance of the eyes which occurs in Bushmen.

The hands and feet are also different. Among the Kung women of the northern Kalahari in particular I saw delicate hands with very long metacarpals and a very small thumb, the elongated metacarpals displacing the thumb towards the wrist. None of the Negritos appear to have anything resembling this; their hands are always rather broad. Moreover, the feet of the male Onges are nearly always flat while those of the women tend to turn in, recalling the small peoples of Indonesia and New Guinea, but not the Bushmen.

An interesting though not congenital abnormality in the Andamanese results from the carrying of weights slung from the head from too early an age. Loads are always carried on their backs by a rope made of bark, the weight being taken on the forehead. The rope presses on the head in the region of the bregma and creates the so-called bregmatic furrow. This is more marked in females, as the women normally do most of the carrying. Even the children travel on their parents' backs, hanging like parcels, until the age of five or six when they are old enough to follow the group on their own.

The Abor, a mongoloid people of small stature in the mountains of North-West Assam, carry loads in the same way, but with no resulting head furrow. The Andamanese have softer cranial bones, and the result of load-bearing is therefore clearly visible. As it occurs in both sexes, it is often hard if not impossible to determine sex from skulls if the pelvis is absent. The long bones are not of

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

much assistance in this respect, as the muscular insertions are exaggerated in both sexes, both being subjected to continued physical effort resulting in muscular bulk.

One quite outstanding physical feature in the Onges is their teeth. The palate is unusually arched, unlike that of the African pygmies or the Bushmen. The teeth, which are never filed or cut, as many primitive peoples do for decorative purposes, are very white; caries is rare, and although never cleaned the teeth are retained till late in life. A common abnormality is that the lateral incisors are as pointed as the canines. This, with the whiteness of the teeth and eyes against the blackness of the skin, gives the Onges a sinister appearance, which may account for the old description of the Andamanese as men with ferocious dogs' heads. The only (summary) cleaning the Onge teeth receive is the use of toothpicks, thinner and rather longer than the European variety and made from the tough, flexible bark of a certain reed. After use, they are carefully thrust into the hair for future occasions. Every Onge has one or more threaded through the hair on top of the head.

The strength of the Onge teeth enables their owners to champ their way through what are for us inconceivable quantities of food, both animal and vegetable, which is chewed slowly and determinedly, dust, earth, sand and all, and then swallowed without apparent ill effects, other than the flatulence arising from overconsumption of animal matter. But the Onges use their teeth for other purposes besides eating. In time the teeth become worn down by the inevitable grinding of dirt and grit, but this does not prevent the Onges from continuing to chew the bark of trees and cords, which is a lifelong occupation. This duty falls mainly on the women, and I have seen aged women, their teeth worn almost to the gums, doggedly chewing bark as their contribution to the communal life of the group. The strength of the teeth is unbelievable – I have seen children of ten to fifteen years crush nails up to two millimetres thick, and dent lumps of iron.

I myself once had good cause to be grateful for their power. My party and I found ourselves stranded in the forest on South Brother without guns or even knives, and without cooking utensils. There were large clutches of turtle eggs buried in the sand nearby and my two Onge companions pointed out a coconut tree loaded with nuts (which turned out to be the only one on the islands, seeded

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

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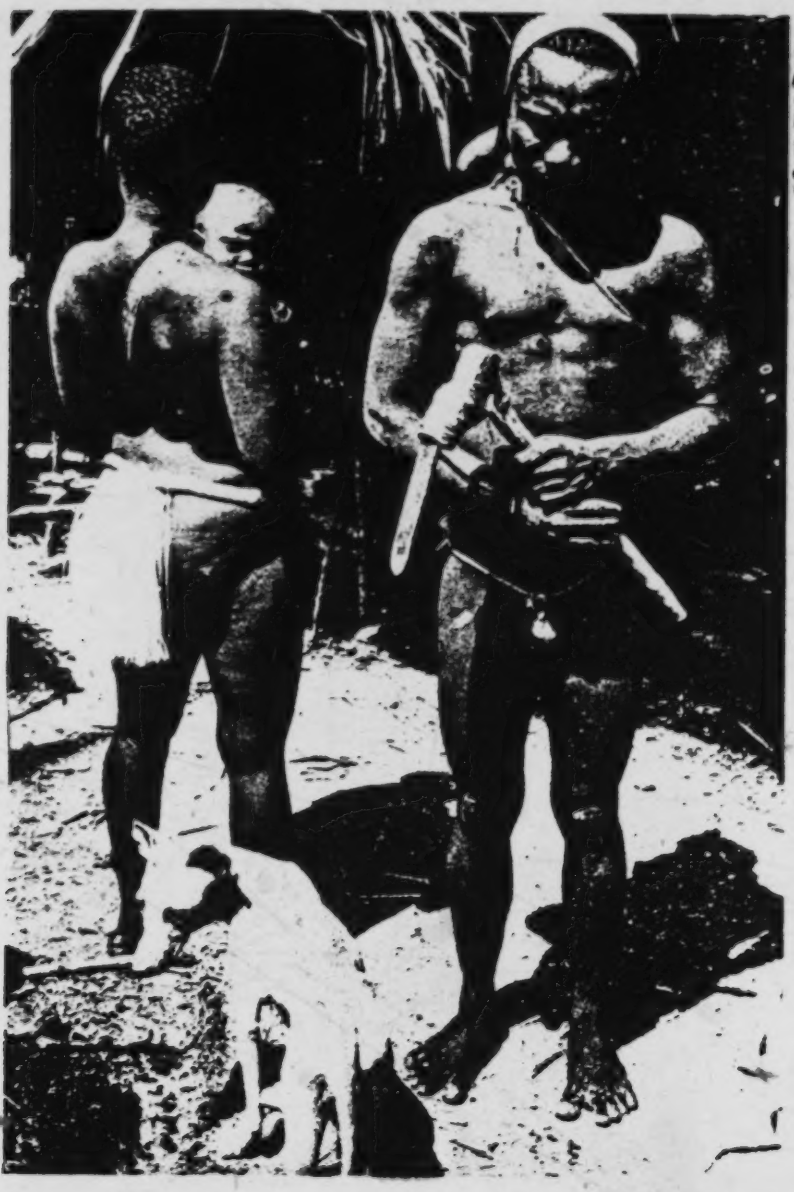
1 The author with two adult islanders

[facing P. 66, A]

11: Cipriani .E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2



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[facing P. 66, E]

/8 ... The axe is one of the few primitive tools in use in the Andamans/

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[147]

14 In spite of their size, the Andaman islanders are capable of carrying enormous weights

15 A temporary shelter in the forest

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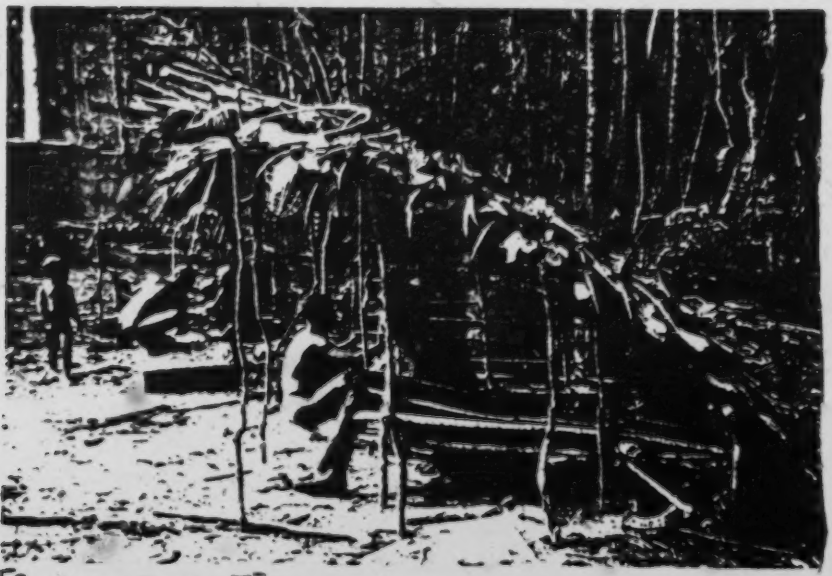

[facing P. 66, J]

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

in the division of all meat. Certain cuts are the property of the hunter, of his helpers, and of his relations and after them, in order, of the remaining members of the group; everyone knows his position in advance. Each portion is tied round with a reed fibre, which is allowed to dangle out over the top of the communal cooking-pot ready to haul the meat out when required.

In the case of pork the prized cut is one which comprises the kidneys and the surrounding fat; this fat is called *cian*,[1] and is very highly esteemed. Some authors (Brown, for example) have stated that turtles and pigs are always cut up with the head ritually pointing towards the sea as otherwise the meat would be considered inedible. This is certainly not the case on Little Andaman, and I have never seen any such directional ritual among any of the Negritos, all of whom practise division of meat according to a prescribed order of precedence. Turtles at any rate are slaughtered facing up the sloping beach simply because it is then easier to hold the beast from behind and avoid its bite. Ritual there is, but usually with a good practical basis.

More ritual attaches to the way in which the game is carried back to the camp, and the wood to be used for the cooking fire. Pigs, killed and gutted, are tied in ropes made of *Ficus laccifera* and carried somehow on the back of the victorious hunter. If it is not far to the camp he will not bother to tie up the snout and feet, but otherwise the front and back legs are tied, and one long cord joins both pairs to the snout – again a practical ritual, giving the hunter a more compact weight to carry.

Man, Portman, Brown and others all say that each type of game has to be cooked over a fire of a particular wood. My own observations showed that whereas the ritual of dissection is inviolable, the Onges always use the first wood that comes to hand, regardless of its source, taking as usual the line of least resistance. This is again in keeping with the tendency of primitive peoples to expend only the very minimum of energy to achieve their object. Their religious beliefs and superstitions are not carried to the limit, simply because

[1] It is interesting that in their very restricted world the Onges have few standards of comparison or words to express condemnation or approval, and this word *cian* is used as one of high praise, applied to inanimate objects, animals, and people alike. The precise qualities which are conveyed by the word are difficult to evaluate in the absence of fuller knowledge of the Onge language.